

[196] I would like to direct the attention of future travelers to the following plants, the leaves and blossoms of which are greatly desired, if he would like to become acquainted with the wild field fruits of the old inhabitants of the country: 222
137

a) *omam!gaub is a plant with succulent leaves; the carrot-like underground part has a strong purgative effect. The name of the plant expresses this drastically: "one lets it fall (!gau) at the door (ams) of the hut (oms)", or, more optimistically translated, "one just makes it to the courtyard." [Picture, omam!gaub. 1/2 natural size. The "Ostrich foot". 2/3 natural size.] [278] ●

) *!ga-/marib- (3. st. cf. p. 352.) or *!na-bab has a smooth, carrot-like, underground part and thin, narrow leaves, 3 centimeters long and crinkled at the edges.

*!ga-bus forms juicy root formations as big as a child's head. Pelargonium incrassatum Curt., called *!a-misai-b, the "Ostrich foot", (so called because of the shape of the budding leaves) is the last of the plants which should be mentioned here because of their edible underground parts.

b) The chief fruits are gourds and cucumbers because of the abundant water in their flesh and the food content of their seeds.

The Topnaars in the region of Waluis Bay received their name !na-ranin from the gourd fruit !na-yab, the Acanthosicyos horrida Welw., on which they live for a large part of the year (cf. Analysis in the appendix). The nara matures in the first four months of the year: the chief harvest time is in February and March. [101]

Then the kraals become desolate. The poorer families depart for the dunes with all their belongings, either taking their mat house with them or building a scanty shelter of brushwood, which can scarcely be called a hut, and only return to their old dwellings to get water when it is unavailable in the nara field. Wealthier Hottentots stay at home and have the nara brought to them by slaves and only go out for the day on a visit or for inspection. [Picture. Half-ripe nara fruit. 2/3 natural size] 221
222
[342]
[567]

The individual families have inherited rights to definite nara bushes (cf. Plate IX above and illustrations, page 146, 147). That is the only case known to me of private ownership of immoveable property outside of the hut area among the Hottentots. The Hottentot defends his nara bushes from attacks by fellow tribesmen by bringing a legal complaint before the captain. No quarter is given the Berg-damaras and Bushmen. I know of several cases in which the thieves 222
423
623

• 278
222
137

[196]



Omami gaub.
1/2 natural size



the "Ostrich foot."
2/3 natural size

together. The skin between the places where the thorn has penetrated is thus raised in two folds, which press firmly together and so close the vein. The thorn is then shortened at both ends so that it disappears under the swelling made by the thread. The arm must be carried in a sling until the thorn and thread come out spontaneously. 752

[213] To the west of !Hoaya!nas, in the border territory of the Witbooi and the Red Nation, a small health resort, Hottentot style, is supposed to have existed when there was still plenty of water. People who had any kind of sickness and wanted to have their veins opened, waded barelegged in the pond of /Oas and let themselves be bitten by the numerous leeches which lived there. 757

If one other than a doctor may be permitted an opinion and if one may support this opinion by the language usage of the Boers (which is well known to the doctors in the Cape Colony), then I would like to claim that, judging from the most obvious symptoms, the sickness which the Hottentot calls *tsu/itso/a-b, or more frequently calls fi-isib, borrowing from the Boer Dutch "vuilziekte," is syphilis. Individual syphilitic sores are superficially opened with a half-sharp instrument that tears rather than cuts (for example a quartz splinter). The wound is washed with sea water by the coastal dwellers, with a soap made from ashes of a bush called /kxanis by the natives of the interior. Then the wound deepened by scraping. As soon as the bleeding stops, they sprinkle the wound with seaweed powder. The strong hollow stalks of the Ecklonia buccinalis (L.) Hornem. (called *//hã/b), which the sea casts up everywhere are slowly charred (not turned to ashes) and the coals pulverized. Before putting powder on the wounds, the sick person takes two swallows of sea water. [164]

If the sores appear all over the body, then, as a native witness reported, the sick person is washed and the skin is scratched with fingernails until the body streams with blood. One man does the scratching, but others are needed to hold the patient firmly, who kicks about wildly from the pain and sometimes goes limp, forcing the process to be interrupted. Powdering concludes the procedure. If new sores form under the scabs, the skin is torn open again. [278]

For assistants of the opposite sex, only the spouse or old people are permitted. The treatment itself may only be performed by those who already have had the sickness. Otherwise, they say, the treatment would be of no avail. But they also recognize the danger of infection, for the sick person may not share either bed or eating or drinking utensils with healthy people. They believe that the person is cured after the disappearance of the sores and that immunity has been acquired. [753]

[214] b) A treatment other than bleeding is used for some foot ailments. One sickness is designated as "Fotzenfuss," *nuägye-fai-bes, or pea-foot, *ai!-naro-s which begins with the swelling of the whole foot or of individual toes. The parts of the sole that one steps on become painful, turn red, and the skin peels. In the middle of the inflamed area, a longish dark foreign body, about 2 centimeters in size, *ho's, shines through. To hasten its discharge, the foot is placed in the stomach dung of a freshly slaughtered goat and kept in the small stomach of the same animal for the night. If the inflamed area opens, [278] then they warm and soften horse manure in water, smear the foot with it, and tie it up until the dark foreign body leaves the wound.

During the cold season, the Hottentot often suffers from bloody festering cuts on the inside joints of his second to fourth toes. The sickness is called *a-ragyetsi-bes, i.e. "curling toes."

Festering cuts, *a-bagu, in the skin of the heel, are smeared with ear wax and sometimes stitched with thorn and bast if they do not have a needle and thread. To heal wounds in the toes, the foot is placed in the warm, uncleaned reticulum of a goat or a sheep, or, best of all, of a cow (because it is the biggest). The foot is kept there until the contents of the stomach have cooled. The method of healing is known to every Hottentot by the name */ha-/ra-gā/. [752 278]

The freshly removed skin of the lizard of the Agama genus is considered a good plaster to put on the feet when the skin has peeled. The fresh brain of these animals is smeared on as a salve. The dried root of the Zygophyllum cardifolium L. f. (called *nu/haib because of its brown leaves) is made into a salve for wounds after being pulverized and mixed with fat. [757 278 752]

I have not been able to differentiate the various kinds of sores which have the name !nu-/ngu.

Characteristic of the metaphorical language of the Hottentots is the expression which describes the spreading of the seat of a disease: the sickness "builds huts" (om, v.). [753]

Splinting (/goe) of a broken bone (*kōōa-s) is the final surgical accomplishment we shall mention. They tie five narrow strips of wood around the broken limb, which they tie to each other at both ends, so that they make a kind of casing. The limb is first wrapped in a skin, taking care that the blood can circulate freely. [752]

They usually bother very little about the afterbirth. They do not care whether it comes out after one hour or days later. In one case the afterbirth still had not come out after 3 days, the woman had developed a fever and the umbilical cord, which was tied to a pole of the hut, had shriveled up to a dry rope. None of the women thought of interfering. A doctor who was traveling through removed the afterbirth. 844

However, in other cases, medicine is given when the afterbirth does not appear. A resin comes out of the lower trunk of a bush called *ho-ras, which becomes incrustated with sand and dust and hardens into dirty lumps [278] with a rough surface. This mass, */nunu-b, (cf. Analysis in the Appendix) is crushed and brewed with hot water. This drink, especially when prepared strong, is also considered a good way to produce bleeding after birth, because they consider it fatal if it does not occur. Sometimes they try a favorite remedy, wrapping in skins, if the afterbirth still has not appeared on the third day. The tail end of a freshly removed goat skin that is still warm is pressed (the wet side towards the inside) on the woman's loins, drawn between her legs and spread out on her lower body.

The afterbirth is buried in the ground.

[221] The nursing. Not much is done to the new citizen of the earth. He is not washed but wiped off with a skin, his whole body greased and wrapped in a skin after the umbilical cord has been wound in a circle. A salve made from fat and the powder of burned ostrich egg shells is always kept prepared for him. This is rubbed on the child's forehead, temples, and nose, and especially in his nostrils, to produce sneezing and thus expel mucus. The fontanels are well greased because they believe that sicknesses enter there most readily. [278] 753 826

The newborn children of the pure Hottentots that I saw on the morning after birth had rosy, not fawn-colored skin. [Picture: A Nursing Topnaar Hottentot Woman, about 35 Years Old].

When the umbilical cord falls off, they rub in the wound a charred, dry, tindery powder which is prepared from the underground parts of Oxalis caledonica Sond (called */ho/abe-s). If the wound is inflamed, this mass is rubbed on mixed with fat. 846 278

A widespread prejudice that seriously endangered the continuance of the Little Namaland Hottentot race, was that the mother's milk was not considered good for a child until the third day. Until then the newborn was given thinned goat's milk or cow's milk, unless another woman who was nursing a child, also nursed him. In other cases, when the poor 853

artificially-fed creatures were given the breast on the fourth day, they ⁸⁵³ were often too weak to suck greedily.

[222] The child is weaned by the mother rubbing the bitter juice of ⁸⁶² an aloe on her nipples. If the mother suffers because the milk is no longer being taken, she is ^[278] milked a few times directly into the ashes of the hearth fire. Just as the milk fizzles away there, it is also supposed to dry up in the woman.

d) Childbed. Directly after delivery the woman is covered up as ⁸⁴⁴ warmly as possible so that she will sweat.

Eyewitnesses reported to me a peculiar custom which is probably no longer practiced today. Several women press firmly on the hip bone of the woman who has just given birth and is still lying on her side. Sometimes this process of "hip sitting" ~~and~~ ^{frithum}, is done in such a way that the person performing this act, while placing her foot on the hip of the woman, takes hold of a hut pole with her arm in order to press against the woman even more firmly. The purpose of this is to press the bones together again which, according to their beliefs, were forced apart by the act of giving birth. That also explains the rule that the woman in labor must lie on her side. The bones of one side are supposed to press with their weight against those of the other side. If she were on her back, her pelvis would, as they say, spread apart.

A Hottentot woman (of the old school), does not touch water; not ⁸⁴⁶ even after the delivery is washing attempted. A white woman wanted to place a cold wet cloth on a Hottentot woman who was bleeding severely and had fainted several times. When she took it from the water and wrung it out, the native women left the hut and made the white woman responsible for the death of the woman which they believed was unavoidable after touching her with water.

The new mother rests in bed until the third day and sometimes until the seventh day. Only the blanket under her is changed. To take care of her needs, the woman leaves her bed from the first day.

To help the after-pains disappear, a hot infusion is given, made from the same roasted and crushed root formations that are used in the care of navel wounds.

After the seventh day, or sometimes not until after the tenth day, the new mother usually pursues her usual activities. I have not been able to check the information of one woman [223] that menstruation ^[841] begins a month after birth, even when a child is nursed.

In conclusion, a word about multiple births. It is not considered ⁸⁴⁵ good luck to have twins. A case of triplets occurred in the year 1897 ^[77]

in the place called Spektakel. The Hottentot woman, Anna Marie, bore during her second marriage two boys and a girl, who were still alive in the year 1902. Her husband was Johannes Fortani, the descendant of a freed Negro slave. I also heard about a case of quintuplets in the year 1884 or 1885. The father, Jacobus van Neel, was a Bastard, the mother, named Trein, produced three girls and two boys. The children were alive at birth but died immediately afterward.

845

3. Use of Medicine

Hottentot medicinal knowledge and methods of healing become less clear, the nearer they approach the field of internal medicine. The use of medicine is all that seems to me worth mentioning.

757

278

The Hottentot leaves nothing untried. Aside from practical success, either imagined or real, another consideration also guides him at times. He knows that among the plants of his country there are many healing ones. He also knows of many ailments for which there is probably some healing plant with which he is not acquainted. Further, every herd boy knows that the goat is not dainty in the choice of the plants it eats; it eats nearly everything and so probably, (as the Hottentot reckons) it also eats the healing plants that he is not yet acquainted with. The effective substances of these plants are transferred to the goat and are partly retained in its manure. Therefore goat manure is believed to contain healing properties.

757

278

825

Thus the treatment of chickenpox, /kxo-ras, consists in the following: the sick person is given a drink several times a day, in which about 1/2 liter of diluted milk is cooked with a handful of fresh (or double the amount if old) goat manure. Lean goat meat is the only other nourishment that he may have.

757

278

Whether the following treatment reported to me by two separate eyewitnesses, is used very much, is uncertain. Several men killed a goat, pulled off its skin as quickly as possible in order to place it on the sick person's body while still warm. It may well be that this wrapping works as a beneficial irritant to the skin.

[224] The dried body of the so-called "jump" snake *no-bo/so/s, Scelotes capensis Gthr. is considered an infallible antidote for snake bite. A few finger widths above and below the bite a deep cut is made, each about 1 centimeter long and the blood is sucked out of each of these cuts for about a half hour with the bleeding horn. Then a small scrap of

752

825

the dried lizard, scarcely a millimeter long, is pressed into the wound 752
and rubbed in with charcoal. The snake wound is washed with water. 825
[Picture. The "Jump Snake," Scelotes capensis Gthr., 1/2 natural
size.]

The use of snake poison as an antidote for poisonous snake bites is 752
perhaps also worthy of scientific investigation. 278

A Hottentot, who knew the poisonous snakes of his country well,
made it a habit to pursue immediately the snake that had bitten him.
He cut out its poison sacks and, squeezed a little of their contents into
water and drank it. He dried the rest of the poison and preserved it
carefully.

Another person drank the fresh bile of a cobra (called !huni-//hui-b) 751
as a preventive against the poisonous effects of snake bites. This is not
an isolated instance, because men who do this are called /ao-!gā aon,
i. e. snake poison men. People are certain that the skin secretions of
such poison eaters (whether rightly or not must still be determined)
heal poisonous snake bites. The poison eater rubs some of his sweat
into a small cut made right next to the patient's bite. Or he dissolves
what he has scraped off his skin in water and the man who has been
bitten drinks it. Whoever has smelled the sweat-soaked clothing of a
Hottentot will find the assertion plausible, that, if the sweat of poison
eaters does have the power to heal, then [225] a little moisture squeezed
from a piece of his clothing is effective.

Many Hottentots follow the same rule which the poison eater does
(fighting the effect of the poison immediately with parts of the poisonous
animal itself), when they have been stung by a scorpion. Without de-
lay they seek out a living scorpion, squash it and place it immediately
on the wound that has been artificially widened. At the same time the
sick person is given a thin solution of tobacco juice as an emetic, on the
basis of an unclear idea that this helps get the poison out of the body.

It seems that tobacco juice (pipe emery) when rubbed into the wound
itself or into a cut next to it, is effective as an antidote for snake bites
and scorpion stings.

One wonders whether there are other useful medicines to be found 757
in the treasure chest of Hottentot medicines, in spite of their blind 278
testing and the self deception of doctors and sick people among the
natives.

The excrement of rock rabbits, *!au-//aru-b, which piles up fist high
in caves is considered a cure for every kind of body retention. A piece

1: Schultze--43A N-5 (1903-1905) 1907 FX13 Hottentot FX13
Nama

752

● 278

136

[224]



The "Jump Snake," Scelotes capensis Gthr. ,
1/2 natural size.

the size of a walnut is dissolved in about 1/3 liter of hot water and the drink is taken hot. It is supposed to cure constipation, inability to pass urine, irregular periods, and to further the discharge of lochia. In the same category belong the supposed effects of the so-called "stone sweat" which was mentioned earlier. 757
278

Their medicines for venereal diseases arouse as little confidence as the ones just mentioned. For protection against gonorrhea, *!ga/ms, the man or woman rubs a knife tip's amount of a powder, which has been prepared from the roots of the *!garisab plant, * [751]

"When I am unable to mention the botanical name, I at least give the native designation which will be a help to later investigators. [28]

into a little wound cut to the right and to the left of the groin. They treat gonorrhea itself locally by dabbing the milky sap of the fresh leaves of a plant called *!gu/bi-b or *!xam#ka/rab into the urethra. Or they dig up the plant and drink as much as possible of a hot infusion made of the crushed root.

It is recommended to syphilis patients that they drink a swallow of their own urine early in the morning. A tea made from the strongly aromatic [226] fleshy leaves of a Geraniaceae (as it seems) which smells strongly of turpentine is supposed to cure syphilis sores.

4. Magic

The medicinal art of the Hottentot is closely allied with magic. 755
Anyone who wishes to may become a doctor, called !gai/aob or magician. The Hottentot term is derived from the magic stuff, !gai/b, which he carries with him in a box. The vegetable ingredients of this stuff consists of roots of a most varied assortment of plants, the flesh and bones of different kinds of chameleons, elephant shrews, bats, and of a little bird of the family of Sylviidae (called foregu) are dried, and placed sometimes in coarsely chopped form, sometimes pulverized in the raw fat of a billygoat, with which the magic box is filled. It is supposed to extract the effective substances from the various ingredients. 756

262 SOCIAL HABITS AND CUSTOMS

Delivery.

844 Birth-giving among the Naman is, in normal circumstances, a carefully prepared event.¹ Towards the end of her pregnancy the woman as a rule goes back to the home of her mother, and even when this is not the case, her mother is usually summoned to be present at the birth. Delivery itself takes place in the woman's hut, from which, during labour, all men are excluded. An old woman well versed in the art of midwifery is called in to supervise. For her services she receives a fee of two goats, if the child is a boy, and only one if it is a girl—a notable expression of the superior value attached to boys. The mother of the pregnant woman and a few of her female relatives are present to lend assistance.

[562] As soon as the first sharp pains commence, the labouring woman turns on her left side, where she is kept in a half-erect, half-lying position, her shoulders and back supported against the knee of one of the attendants, her head bent forward on to the breast, and her legs sharply bent. It would mean death to the child if she were to lie on her back or with legs outstretched. Delivery is effected with the aid of the midwife, who manipulates the foetus until it has safely emerged from the womb. The umbilical cord is tied half-way with a thread of sinew or wood fibre, and cut through above this by the midwife. The part attached to the baby is left until it gradually comes away by itself. No special significance seems to attach to the umbilical cord, nor to the placenta, which, however, is buried in the ground.

The newborn baby may not be washed with water. It is cleaned with a dry skin, rubbed all over with fat, then laid on the ground, wrapped in another skin. A salve of fat and powder made of burned ostrich egg-shell is always kept at hand, and with this the baby is streaked on the forehead, temples, and nose. The fontanelles also are thickly smeared with it, to prevent the entry of disease. Among the Hottentots of Little Namaqualand the milk of the mother's breast is not regarded fit for the child until about the third day after birth. Till then the baby is given goat's or cow's milk, unless another woman can be found, already weaning her own child, who is able to give it her breast. Failing the latter resource the artificially-fed baby, when at last put to its mother's breast, is often already too weak to suck with success. Schultze, who records this custom, offers no explanation for it. It will be remembered, however, that a similar usage was noted

KNOWLEDGE OF DISEASE

409

states that the head of the joint was tied up with sinew, and cut through below, the sticky juice of certain leaves and other herbs then being applied to the raw surface. 752
304

For relatively localized pains the universal remedy is bleeding, either by venesection with bandaging or by cupping. In the former case, as described by Kolb, a thong is tied round the limb and the vein cut open below it. When enough blood has been drawn off, the incision is closed with mutton fat and the leaf of some herb placed over it. Cupping, apart from its use in the /*nau* ceremonies and diseases, is specially employed for stiffness and pains in the limbs, in order to hinder their swelling, for colics and pains in the stomach, and also, according to Laidler, for the relief of madness and epilepsy. The cupping horn is a carefully-prepared tip of calf or goat horn open at both ends, with the broader end carefully bevelled from within outwards. The smaller end is closed with a ball of soft worked resin, which is pierced by a long thorn. The horn is first applied dry, i.e. over the unscarified surface of the skin, to produce insensibility. The numbed part is then scarified, the horn pressed tightly over the bleeding cut, and the operator sucks hard. When suction is well established, he bites the resin and so closes the aperture in it. The horn is then left in place until the required amount of blood has been withdrawn. 757

Cures and antidotes for the bites and stings of the multitudinous snakes, spiders, and scorpions found in the country naturally play a large part in Hottentot medicine.¹ An "infallible" antidote for snake bite is the dried body of the lizard *Scalans capense Gthr.* Small deep cuts are made slightly above and below the bite, and cupped for about half an hour. Then a tiny fragment of the lizard's body is pressed into each cut and rubbed in with wood ashes. The bite itself is only washed with water. Snake poison itself may also be used as an antidote, a small dose of prepared venom diluted in water being swallowed. Sometimes the "doctor" makes incisions over the bite, then places a piece of venom in his mouth and proceeds to suck the wound. Vegetable poultices are sometimes applied, or the crushed head of the snake may be used in the same way in case of snake bite, while similarly powdered spider or tarantula is used as a poultice over their bites. In the case of scorpion sting, the particular animal if possible is captured, its tail and nippers pulled off, and the body ground and applied as a paste. The patient at the same time is given 752
278

¹ Schapera, op. cit., 112-13; Laidler, op. cit., 413-42.

752 a solution of tobacco juice diluted in water as an emetic. Tobacco
 • 278 juice taken from the stem of the pipe may also be rubbed into the bite
 or into a cut made near it, and Schultze seems to think that this really
 may be an effective antidote. Another favourite remedy is white
 [825] potassium chlorate, in the form of the inspissated urine and faeces
 of the dassie purified by the action of the atmosphere, which is rubbed
 into scarified snake bites and scorpion stings.

752 The immunization against snake bite reported of the Bushmen is
 also practised by the Hottentots.¹ One of Laidler's informants,
 the "poison doctor" for the northern parts of Little Namaqualand,
 learned his profession from his father, who in his turn had been
 similarly taught. He stated that when he was a boy—and to begin
 with the boy must have a good constitution—his father made two small
 cuts above the elbow of each arm, into which he rubbed a small portion
 of the dried venom of the cobra and night adder. Two weeks later
 his father prepared a lump of venom containing several varieties,
 and gave him a piece to hold upon his tongue until he felt "funny and
 shivery". This was repeated twice weekly. Then he was given a
 piece to swallow. The dose was increased daily until it reached the
 size of a pin's head, and this dose the informant was still taking every
 day. The only venom not used in this process was that of the puff-
 [59] adder, which his father told him rotted the flesh. Men immunized in
 this way are known as /ao/ga aon, snake-bite men, and they treat others
 bitten by snakes. Apart from the regular antidotes and cures already
 mentioned, they often use the perspiration from their body and
 clothing, either rubbing it into small cuts made near the bite or mixing
 it with water which the patient is required to drink. This form of
 treatment is, of course, reminiscent of that employed in the /op diseases.

278. For internal and certain other troubles the Hottentots use a great
 789 variety of herbs and roots. When any of the roots considered really
 powerful medicines are dug from the ground, states Mrs. Hoernlé,²
 something has to be given in return, otherwise the root will not
 act, and similarly when it is passed from person to person a present
 must also be given. When taking the root, one addresses it with
 the words: "Ah, there I have dug this, and if you don't help me,
 [823] harming me rather, I shall throw you into cold water"—another
 instance, it will be noted, of the protective power of water. Elsewhere
 Mrs. Hoernlé mentions, by way of example, that the root used in

¹ Laidler, *op. cit.*, 478-9; Schultze, *loc. cit.*

² "Social Value of Water among the Namas," 322.

KNOWLEDGE OF DISEASE

411

treating lupus, and consequently known as /*nomi heip*, "lupus stick," 278 ● must be treated with great deference. "When a person comes to the bush, before digging he must put down a bracelet, a bead, or some little thing. If he fails to do so, the root will simply disappear. Later, if he divides it among his friends, the same process takes place; each must give some little thing for the piece received. I was warned to do the same lest all the virtue leave the root, even if it did not wholly disappear." 789

Laidler has described at some length the herbal lore of the half-breed Naman of Little Namaqualand.¹ From the details he gives it appears that the principal ailments treated with herbs and roots are internal pains and fevers, classed together, he says, as "fires", and distinguished only by locality, certain women's troubles, flatulence as an entity, diarrhoea, and, among the accidental injuries, burns. In anemias and weaknesses red substances are used, such as *Pelargonium anceps*, and repeated doses are given during fevers. They are employed, several of his informants stated, because they are red, and the blood is red, and, therefore, they strengthen the blood; and, of course, when grown on red ground their value as drugs is increased enormously! All such red materials when used and finished with must be disposed of carefully, because good stuff must never be thrown away. *Sutherlandia frutescens*, another red plant, was formerly used in decoction for washing wounds, and given as drink for fevers; nowadays it is used for consumption, chicken-pox, etc. *Eriospermum latifolium*, a red tuber, rasped up raw, is considered a good poultice on bruises and cuts, and here again the colour appears to have been the chief attraction. Other decoctions for coughs and colds and fevers are made from the leaves of various Sages (*Salvia* sp.), as well as from the leaves of one species of wild olive, which are administered in any cold or fever, from a common cold to typhoid. Other wild olives are used as sweating draughts, as is also *Grassula hypoleioides*. 757 278 [822]

Another species of wild olive is used in decoction of leaves for dropsy, flatulence, and pains in the stomach, as a lotion for sores, and the leaves are also used as a plaster. Pains in the stomach are also treated with decoctions of *Eriocapulus umbellatus*, or of the powdered and boiled root of *Royena pallens*; pains in the back are treated with *Boscia frutida*; and shooting pains with *Passerina filiformis* or *Barkheya* sp. For toothache the people chew the alkaline

¹ "Consumption of lung among the Hottentots," 79.

² Op. cit., 424-5, 427-8; cf. for the Nama of L.W.A., Schöner, op. cit., 223 ff., Naim, op. cit., 632-3.

757 leaves of *Mesembrianthemum tortuosum*, also taken in the same way
 278 for pains in the stomach, or the leaves of *Galenia africana*; headaches
 are treated with a decoction of dagga seeds (*Cannabis sativa*), also
 used for bronchitis; and for pains in the eyes an ointment made
 from raw fat and pulverized dagga is applied.

[845] *Mesembrianthemum edule*, stamped and given as a pulp, is used
 for delayed labour or retained afterbirth; *Euphorbia resinsus* is given
 for tedious labour; and for troubles after parturition the leaves of
Rhus sp. are boiled and taken in decoction. But a more common
 remedy for women's ailments is /au /arub, the condensed urine and
 faeces of the dassie (commonly known among the Dutch farmers
 and the Dutch-speaking Hottentots as "dassiepis"). Boiled and
 strained the liquid is given in dry confinements, during parturition
 generally, and for irregularities of menstruation. In large doses
 [847] it is believed to be the perfect abortifacient. The same substance,
 finally purified by the action of the atmosphere, is given internally
 [752] in decoction and infusion for all sorts of poisoning of whatever origin,
 and rubbed into scarified snake bites and scorpion stings. It is also
 used in such minor complaints as stiffness in the back and pains in
 the stomach.

Diarrhoea is treated with a decoction made from the powdered and
 boiled roots and stem of *Royena pallens*; and *Sarcocaulum Burmanni*,
 pounded fine, is used as an astringent for the same complaint.
 Purgatives, Laidler remarks, have a strange fascination for the natives,
 and are widely used for pains in the stomach or "fevers" "to work
 them out". A tangible removal, it is argued, must always be
 productive of good, for the Hottentots, according to Laidler, "firmly
 believe that whatever they suffer is caused by a tangible something."
 One of his informants, a professional herbalist, said that the same
 medicine prepared in different ways may have different actions. Thus
 if *Royena pallens* is cut in an upward direction it will act as an emetic,
 if cut downwards it is transformed into a purgative! Other purgatives
 are *Royena hirsuta* and *Chiruma Jacqiera*, two mouthfuls of which
 taken in decoction, are an efficient dose and have a rapid effect. The
 latter plant is also used in decoction for boils, as are also *Cynanchum*
capense Thun. and a species of *liana*. The latter is also burned and
 the ash sprinkled on ringworms.

Plasters and poultices are in common use, and it appears that a soft
 hot application, whether of goat dung, the inside of a goat
 disembowelled alive to prevent loss of heat, or a preparation of herbs,

STAR LORE AND CALENDAR

413

is a favourite remedy with the Hottentots. The skin drawn off a living goat is used while still warm as an application for any severe pain. Of vegetable substances the root of *Sarcocaulon Burmanni*, ground fine, is used as a poultice which is peppery and acts like a mustard plaster; the stem of *Corylus Walckii* is pounded after spine and bark have been removed, and applied to abscesses; and *Berkheyra* sp., powdered, is used as a plaster for burns and boils. Another favourite, and indeed the first, application to burns is nasal mucus; and the cast skin of a snake, burned to powder, is also used for the same injury. Goat dung as a poultice on a sore stomach is widely used; the underlying motive seems to be that since the goat eats a large variety of plants, many of which must have medicinal properties, these properties will be to some extent retained in its dung. For the same reason the stomach of the porcupine is dried and portions infused as required. Its action is diaphoretic. The porcupine eats so many "bush things and strong things", said one of Laidler's informants, that its stomach contents must be very good medicine! Schultze notes also that among the Nama a patient suffering from chicken-pox is given several times daily a decoction made up of a handful of goat dung cooked in about half a litre of diluted milk; while powdered hyena dung is given to children for convulsions.

STAR LORE AND CALENDAR

The nature lore of the Hottentots, revealed in their foods and medicines, their industries, pastoralism and hunting, is based more or less directly on material needs and intimately bound up with them. Apart from the knowledge empirically derived in this way from the cares of everyday life, there is little trace of organized conceptions of the world of nature. The only other provinces, according to Schultze, in which the rudiments of scientific synthesis may be seen are, first, biology, of direct import to the hunter and herdsman, and, second, the division of time, whose periods in their change of season and far-reaching influence on the living world likewise force the attention of the herdsman. The former of these Schultze does not discuss at all, but of the latter and its astronomical foundations he gives a valuable detailed description.¹

From early childhood the Hottentot is accustomed to find his way about in the open, on the pasture fields. As a child he relies for the means of doing so upon adjacent objects, on groups of bushes,

¹ *Handbook and Kalahari*, 240-25.

764 which is placed in front of the dead man's house. In the old days they wailed and
 [17] writhed in lamentation. Nowadays they sing hymns. In Berseba where a man died
 late in the afternoon, hymns were sung right through the night and all the morning until
 the burial by the missionary took place. Meantime the man's relatives slaughter animals
 according to their means, and collect the blood separately into one or more pots. The
 entrails are collected in other pots, and the meat in yet others; all the different families
 [27] who are taking part providing pots. The blood is heated to boiling point, and the herb
 called //ginsab is mixed in with it. A chopper, /šp, which has been heated red hot is
 [42] then stirred round in it to make the steam rise. The immediate relatives of the man —
 men, women, and children — collect round the pots and cover their heads with their skins
 [30] so that they perspire (sweat). Then an old man, who is related neither to the man nor to
 the woman, takes potblack and makes a line on the stomach of each person — "to prevent
 their getting pains from eating the food", says !Amatia. The sweating is done in the dead
 person's hut, and so is the putting on of the black line and the eating. The relatives eat
 only of the flesh, other members of the kraal eating the entrails, while the blood can be
 used only by the officiating person and others of like age. In Berseba I was told that the
 line on the stomach was made with the blood, not with the potblack. Some informers
 say the sweating is done in the hut, others say outside. Unfortunately in the cases which
 I witnessed myself the people were too badly off to have meat at all, and there was simply
 [53] coffee drinking. The widow takes no part in these rites at all. "She doesn't belong to
 the man's family", one informant said indignantly when I asked.

768 How long the widow remained inau, I do not know. One informant says, "Even to
 this day, after the death of a husband, or child, a woman won't use cold water for a few
 days". But the cleansing is often done immediately after the burial. Formerly, accord-
 ing to Gottlieb and others, it was done sometime after the burial when the hut had been
 rebuilt in another spot. Other remarks show that even now some time may elapse between
 the burial and the cleansing, for another informant tells me that if a widow were obliged
 for some reason to go from the shore in Walfish Bay to an inland settlement, she would
 [78] on no account take the path through the valuable *haras* plants, but would go by the
 desert path where no vegetation of any sort is to be found.

During the interval, whether it be long or short, the widow must not touch uncooked
 meat or cold water, go among the cattle, or handle the pots. She is tended by one
 or more elderly widows, not relatives of either man or wife, who take her through the
 purification rites when the time comes. First she is cleaned from head to foot with *phoup*
 [78] or, on the Orange River, with a brew made from a species of *euphorbia*, or, in Walfish

* None of the woman's relatives take part in this ceremony.

RITES OF TRANSITION AND THE CONCEPTION OF DEATH AMONG THE HOTTENTOTS

81

Day, where there are no cattle nowadays, with ground hares' pipe, goats' dung, and fat. Next, her whole body is rubbed with lincop, and the hair is cut from the top of her head. In cutting off a bit of her hair, they spit on the end of it and say, "The next husband you get must be a lucky one, and get him quickly." The woman also puts on a complete set of new clothes.

All this time there is a pot on the fire in the hut with a small piece of meat in it which the old woman has fetched from the cooking pots. She takes some of the black from this pot, and puts a mark under each eye, "so that everything the widow meets may be nice to her", and also on the chest, "so that her food may go down nicely". The meat in the pot is eaten by the old woman. The hair which was cut off is mixed with the ash of the fire, and the whole is then removed from the hut and a fresh fire made. The next morning the widow will take the /drep, "contents of the animal's stomach", and, together with the old woman, who goes in front, will scatter them over the cattle kraals saying, "dohle /she", "let there be plenty of milk". There follows the milking of a cow, the re-introduction to water, the fetching of wood, just as in the case of the *!kxain*.² The water ceremony was described to me as follows by Ekaba. First the old woman sprinkles the widow with water saying "Xari dama kauru *!she !she*", "don't get this, get fat like the *!she* onion". Then they go together to the spring, where the old woman takes a stick, beats the water, and scatters it on the widow. She also dips her hand in the water, and sprinkles the widow's face and her whole body. Finally she puts clay on her legs saying again, "Xari dama kauru *!she !she*", and, filling the water pot, //ho-*!she*, she sets it on the widow's head. Then they go home.

If it is a woman who has died, the treatment of the husband is much the same, but Gottlieb gave me a few additional details. After the husband has been cleaned, two cuts are made on his forehead, and //she³ juice is rubbed in. In the old days, as mentioned above, the cut was made with the //gurin, a new piece being broken off for each occasion. The widower's hair is cut from the back of the head, also with the //gurin. Before he has been cleaned in this way he must not leave the hut. After the hut has been cleaned, some dahi and //ghab tree branches are soaked in water over night. Next morning the widower and his attendant go out among the cattle and sheep, and sprinkle them with this water.

When a child has died, both parents become huan, and have to be dealt with similarly.

* * *

I am fully aware how incomplete and indefinite these notes are in many details. It may well be that there is still some chance of filling in the gaps, especially for some

² A small drink with antelope's hooves.

³ A [i.e. A young marriageable woman. See cat. 46, pp. 72 ff. - Analyst]

757 argument, be a good "blood giver." This is an instance of the modern application of ancient sympathetic method.

754 The further information here gathered together, represents the work of four years' questioning, checking, and corroborating statements made by many herbalists, not a few of whom were also practitioners of witchcraft, that is, practitioners of major qualifications. One took four bottles of water mixed with earth and the ground remains of a certain little red-headed hornet that builds in houses and huts. Before rising each morning he drank a mouthful of the suspension. On the fifth day of this treatment; "there lay the sick people—and there lay the medicines. And now pressed the new power between the shoulders." Here, perhaps, is some small relic of the initiation of a man into the cult of P/goi* sup.

824
278 Only occasionally is there a little resemblance between the herbs used by the Native and those of the modern occidental pharmacopoeia. Yet there is a sufficient similarity between them to cause the sufferer to cease his scoffing, and realize that here, after all, lies the root and origin of modern medicine—modern scientific medicine which owes at least one of its drugs to this ancient Hottentot herbal, namely, *Buchu*. The bitter roots are similar in appearance on cross section, colour of infusion, taste, and action to the *Radix Calumbae* of modern pharmacy. But, with this one exception, there is no commercial future for any other item. The quantity of most of the herbs and medicinal bushes in the country is but small.

757
822
278 Red substances are used in anemias and weaknesses, and repeated doses are given during fevers. They are used, several authorities state, because they are red and the blood is red, and therefore they strengthen the blood, and, of course, when grown on red ground, their value as drugs is increased enormously. All such red materials when used and finished with must be disposed of carefully, because good stuff must never be thrown away. Root wortle, for weaknesses, Balson's ear, the Kalken bloom, Ecol rainkie, are examples, and in each the reason for use is their colour, and, should they grow in red ground, they must be good. The same principle is expressed in the use of the dark lichen which grows on almost all granite outcrops in Namaqualand, which is used in decoction as a mouth-wash for teething.

759
278
824 Barond makes young people's medicine as the moon grows during the first days of the month, and never prepares any when the moon is on the wane. Yet he always examines cut sections of roots to see if they come from poor ground. He evidently works on a combination of "scientific" and "sympathetic" lines. The same medicine prepared in a different manner may have a different action. Thus, if black root be cut in an upward

[104]

*For ease in printing and reading I have denoted the chords thus:—
D/ the dental; P/ the palatal; C/ the cerebral; L/ the lateral and
X/ the guttural.

direction it will act as an emetic; should it be cut downwards it is transformed into a purgative. The *Pier-boom*, also, is used in this manner. Purgatives have a strange fascination for the Native, and for pains in the stomach or "fevers" they have been used to "work them out," that is, a tangible removal must always, they argue, be productive of good, for they firmly believe that whatever they suffer is caused by a tangible something.

Rule of thumb methods prevailed in treatment, and the lore was handed down from father to son. In the beginning, man noticed that when he awakened in the morning he felt at his best, worked, or hunted better than later in the day; slackened and grew tired as the sun sank beneath the western horizon. Then he jumped to the conclusion that the rising of the sun was responsible for well-being, growth, and strength; and that the falling, setting sun was responsible for tiredness, falling strength and death. Therefore, the old tooth was thrown towards the rising sun, but a P/gai sup or witch doctor would throw it towards the setting sun to produce an evil effect. A fright was something tangible, and Nama women still by palpation diagnose the presence of a lump, a crystallized fright that has settled in the stomach. They state too, that the woman's "life place" resides on the right side, and that when she is sickly it moves about.

From the details of this herbal lore it appears that the chief medical ailments treated by the Hottentots were pains in the stomach and fevers, closed together as "fres," and distinguished only by locality, flatulence as an entity, diarrhoea, and among the accidental injuries, burns. Several specific complaints had specific treatment. Kolben described the treatment of headache by shaving the head with a sharp knife, leaving furrows between the mounds of hair. If the cause was supposed to be a "wind in the head," then massage was applied to the nape of the neck; and snuff of "docha," which smells of garlic (*asafetida*) was used. A case occurred during 1923 in Namaqualand of ossification of the temples as treatment for madness. Old writers mention this as the means whereby pains were let out. Infantile convulsions must have given the old women much work. A favourite prescription for this complaint was, and still is, Stink kruid leaves, the dried Midney of the D/ais jackal, and the sea bean, whatever that may be. Of these a powder is made which is worked into a linen band (in old days, a strip of hide) and fastened round the neck of the small patient. Small doses are then given internally mixed with mother's milk. The treatment is continued for one moon.

Alternating periods of famine and feast upset many stomachs. When excess was recognized to be the cause of his discomfort, the Hottentot took the juice of aloes in warm broth. The leaves to-day are dried and chopped up as required.

759
278
824821
761826
754

827

761
826

757

[278]

757

824

278

MARRAGE.

757
755
[P41]
[P42]

Where pain was felt, fat was rubbed in. If this was unsuccessful, then the doctor performed passes over the part, with his hands, and then let drop a piece of wood from the nose and asserted that it was out of the patient's flesh. (Campbell.) Plasters of fat were applied from a freshly killed animal, and motions made with the hands over the plaster, so that medicine was combined with magic. Should that fail, then incisions were made. Massage was, and still is, in common use, and is called *P/kooce*. When women are behind their time with menstruation a rolling movement of the hand on the stomach is the correct method of treatment, and presumably it was a loosening motion. For pains and sprains, punching, kneading, and rolling are employed. *P/koo* is the transference of heat from a fire to the part affected by the inter-mediation of the hand, which is warmed and applied gently. In the case of the unfruitful woman, she is massaged downwards on the abdomen. If this does not produce the desired effect, then the *P/gai sup* may be consulted, and he may do the rubbing.

Surgery.

752

The Hottentots' knowledge of surgery was limited. They successfully reduced dislocations. The joint was rubbed briskly with fat and the limb then moved briskly up and down. For example, a dislocation of the right shoulder would be reduced by gripping the patient's hand as though about to shake, and then vigorously pulling him towards, and then pushing him away from one. Campbell says that they tied splinters of wood around broken limbs and left them until the bone was firm again.

• [P78]
232
142

Amputation of a finger joint was common and possibly led to experiments upon larger limbs. Kolben states that the head of the joint of the finger was tied up with sinew, and then cut through below. To the raw surface, leaves of myrrh and sweet herbs were applied and tied on. He suggests that this method was used for the removal of larger limbs, and a skeleton found near Oorika showed that a limb might be removed or lost and the patient live for at least a while afterwards. Our old Nama women stated that the "old people," when a leg was badly broken, amputated it through the knee joint after tying a thing tightly around the lower end of the thigh. It is common knowledge that the native is an expert at disjuncting any animal. The operation of gelding animals, especially bull calves, was in daily use and was performed by leavering the testicles between two stones. The monorchism, so frequently referred to by early travellers when writing of the Hottentots, was doubtless the application of the same method to male babies with the intention of reducing the number of twins born—once again a sympathetic reason.

TOXICOLOGY.

p25
157

p25

The snake stone has been a famous antidote in all countries. The South Africans imported them from India, but few farmers could afford to purchase this remedy because of the expense. Barrow examined specimens and pronounced them to be pieces of firm bone charred round the edges leaving a white speck in the centre. When thrown into water, a snake stone caused bubbles to rise and this test was a proof of genuineness. It adhered to the snake bite, sucked out the poison, and was cleaned by soaking in water which it turned blue. Country people believed that it was obtained from the head of a snake. The snake stone of the Hottentot is quite a different matter, though it also is believed to be part of a snake. A young Richtersvalder gave this description: "I saw a snake's light. If you see it afar off it looks like a person's fire, but I know that there are no people there. Go nearer, and then it is seen that the light walks about. Then I keep away. I have heard that if a snake's hole be closed with earth that the snake then bites himself to death. Next day the snake stone is found in front of the hole where he dropped it when he went away."

Sam, two hundred miles south of the last informant, says that at night a twinkle is seen on the rocks, and that is a snake stone; and it is seen because the snake is away at the river. Then, to procure the snake stone it is necessary to keep a good look-out, and to approach cautiously with a handful of beast dung, which is to be thrown so that it puts out the light. Thereupon the nearest snake becomes blind and cannot see, and can only creep aimlessly to and fro. Next day the dung is picked up and the snake stone, which is the snake's strength, taken away. He is ordinarily a strong-tempered fellow, but after losing his stone he becomes weak, and cannot sit up to bite. The stone is used by the Natives together with bush medicines for poisonous swellings. Probably it is one of the numerous quartz crystals, some of which are embedded in the rocks, which cover in profusion all over Namaqualand, and that reflect light at evening time.

p27
159

Joseph Klaus, whose father was a full-blooded Nama, is the Poison Doctor for the Northern portion of Namaqualand. He learned his profession from his father, who in his turn had been taught by his father. He states that a boy must be strong to begin with, that is, he must have a good constitution. His father made two small cups above the elbow of each arm, and into them rubbed a small portion of the dried venom of the cobra and night adder. Two weeks later his father prepared a lump of venom that contained several varieties, and gave him a piece to hold upon his tongue until he felt "funny and shivery." This was repeated twice weekly. Then he was given a piece to swallow. The dose was increased daily until the size of a pin's head was reached. Though now about forty years old, Joseph still takes his daily dose. The only venom

not used in this process is that of the puff adder, because his father told him that it rots the flesh.

The treatment that this man adopts for bites of the cobra is incisive over the bite; he then places a piece of venom in his mouth and proceeds to suck the wound. He also gives the patient a small dose of prepared venom to be swallowed, which he says, congeals the poison inside so that he vomits it out. Puff adder bites he treats similarly.

Jacob catches snakes by breaking their backs and so paralyzing them; they must not be killed. The head is fixed with a forked stick, after which the snake may be picked up by the back of its neck. The sacs of poison are carefully dissected out, each intact with its fang, from beneath the eyes. The sacs are ligatured at the base of the fangs to prevent the escape of venom. They are then hung up to dry. They are not mixed. Jacob wears no head cloth, and therefore scrapes the greasy, sweated band of his old hat and mixes this with water to give to the patient. This internal dose is given only when it is seen that the poison "has got to the heart," and is given, as is the venom, to congeal the injected venom. Either the sweat or the venom will do, both have the same action. He also uses Bo Meester, and gives this drug internally for as long as the patient may be ill, and applies Black Klipweert or Dassepis plasters externally. One other old snake catcher gave me exactly the same information.

The gecko lizard, the D/ung D/ung, is by all, white and black alike, credited with being deadly poisonous. The only poisonous lizard has its habitat in Mexico; but Jacob dissects out some gland and uses it in the same manner as the venom sac of the snake.

Another Poison Doctor explained his immunity thus; after eating poison the snakes smell the man, do not like him, and run away from him, therefore, spittle and sweat are curative. (The Dutch used to give high prices for pieces of Poison Doctor (and cloths.) Here, once again, the sympathy becomes apparent.

In a country that Nature has cursed with multitudes of snakes, spiders, and scorpions, cures and antidotes for their bites and stings naturally form a large section of the folk medicine. Katsen, a potato-like root, sweet to taste, is used raw, in slices, applied wet to the wound to draw out the poison. Yellow Kafir wood, ground, is used as a poultice. This appears to have a certain caustic action. The crushed head of the snake may be applied as a poultice to snake bite. Bo Meester may be rubbed into incisions over the bites. Powdered spider or tarantula is used as a poultice over their bites. In the case of scorpion sting the particular animal if possible is captured, its tail pulled off, also its nipper, the body is ground and applied as a poultice. In each case of scorpion sting that the writer has treated, the body of the scorpion always accompanied the

278
759

752

[224]
278
752825
136278
752

- 278 patient. On the spot where a snake has lived for many years.
752 the Natives say, a slimy patch develops that is almost cement like. This is used as an antidote for all poisonous bites, and is also given to dying people.

ABSTRACT OF HOTTENTOT HERBAL.

- 278 In discussing the various herbs used by the Hottentot medicine man, the following plan has been adopted:—

The Nama name is first given for the purposes of reference, then, in some cases, reference by travellers or other observers, and when modern uses are discussed the Nama name (if known), the Afrikaanse name and the scientific name are given.

MEDICINES.

Kanna. Kanna is a *Salacia*, of which there are several species. Graevenbroeck mentions that it was used similarly to hemp, and that the leaves were roasted in ashes and used as food. Paterson states that a certain district around the Kromme River was called Channa by the Hottentots because of the quantity of the plant which grew there.

- 278 Namaquas in 1662 accepted presents from the Dutch, and
276 in return gave fat-tailed sheep and Kanna, which the Commander pronounced to be similar to the Chinese Ginseng. The Cape root was scarce and was considered valuable, and possibly is the channa mentioned by the traveller Paterson in 1779. During the early days of the settlement at the Cape, a Hottentot would perform any task willingly if he knew that the reward was to be a piece of kanna. It would appear that certain of these writers confuse the root singin or kanna with kaurgoed, the leaves of a *Mesembryanthemum*, because they described properties which are certainly those of the latter. It was chewed and retained in the mouth for a while, when their spirits would rise, eyes brighten, and faces take on a jovial air, and they would commence to dance. But if indulged in to excess it robbed them of their senses and they became intoxicated.]

- 278 Kaurgoed, *Mesembryanthemum tortuosum*. Leaves chewed for toothache and pains in the stomach. Has a strong narcotic effect due to alkaloid, mesembrine. Will make a child sleep. Used to-day for use in horses.

Sisal, *Mesembryanthemum Crystallinum*. Nama N/ahoo or N/nghoop, is used for taking hair off skins, and is still in use among farmers.

- [276] Kurremoor, *Mesembryanthemum stellatum*. One of the beer making roots, a deliriant and intoxicant with an earlier stimulant action.

- 278 Krampackhousch, *Cotyledon Welchii* or *Leucortia anaxalis*.
757 Stem is pounded and used for poultices on chancres after spine and bark have been removed. When dry has somewhat the appearance of ginseng.

Buchu barosma, Letulina. Nama Sab (Tyndale). P/nkaou (name given to writer). Two varieties known in Nama as D/nhora, D/khoma or Haas buchu, and P/kabourie. Considered by Hottentot to possess great virtues in curing disorders, and rarer forms are valuable to the Native. In powder used for dusting, for fire and sunburns. Baby powder made of D/nhora kept in tortoise shell puff box, roasted with fat and dropped in ear for earache. Powder also mixed with C/ghoonabi, an acacia thorn sucker, and then considered a high class powder. The second rate powder used for babies was mixed with ground acacia thorn bark, and is named O/kai. D/nhora Buku is roasted with oil and fat, mixed with mother's milk and dropped into the ear for earache. P/nkaou is rare and valuable, and a thimblefull is worth from a sheep to an ox. It is obtained in mountainous districts and when used is pounded and tied in a cloth over which hot water is poured. Is this a method due to exercise of economy?

P/then dancep, or sweet honey, a sticky soft-leaved sweet tasting plant, is also used for powder making.

The thorn tree sucker was put to many uses. The Bushman used its ashes to blacken his face. To-day an oil not unlike cajuput is expressed and used for rheumatic troubles.

Xghoria or Xhoua, which means "smell strong," is a plant so far not identified. The whole plant is ground up and strewn on dead bodies, and is also applied to the living body when it has an unpleasant odour. This powder is also used as a snuff to keep away the smell of the dead "so that it doesn't strike in."

Bitter Roots. Many roots are known to-day under the name of bitterbush, or bitter wurtle, that is, bitter bush or bitter root. The chief are the blue bush, *Royena peltata*, *Xymalobium undulatum* (*Acrolepis crispus*?) and the Sand Bitter hound, a tall bush found in the mountains. These are so much used by the present white population that the Afrikaans name has quite ousted the Nama one. The blue-bush root is also known as the black root, the wonderful emetic-purgative. These roots are powdered and boiled, and the decoction is used for pains in the stomach; if used for diarrhoea, then the stems of the plant are included. The liquor so prepared is greenish in colour and is exceedingly bitter, with a *Nux vomica* type of bitterness.

Dagga. Two species are recognised; white dagga, *Leonotis leonurus*; and klip dagga, *Leonotis orotic*. Oravensbrook mentions its use. The powdered leaves, he said, were made into a little cake no bigger than a Riksdaler, a coin about the size of a modern shilling, which the Hottentots chewed, even as the Indians and Chinese chewed opium. In 1780 its use, mixed with tobacco introduced by the Europeans, is mentioned. A decoction of the roots is used for headaches and for bronchitis. An ointment made from raw fat and pulverised dagga

278
757

[34]

278

278
764278
757

278
257
[276]

leaves is used for pains in the eyes. Its growth for commerce is now prohibited by law. It is still used with tobacco for smoking. A decoction of seeds boiled and allowed to stand is used for bronchitis and headaches.

Kraalbosch, D/kool dabee, Kraal bosch, *Galenia africana*, is chewed for toothache in small quantities. If too much is used it blisters the mucous membrane of the mouth. This bush is now used in a mixture in decoction with Aister bosch for toothache and also for venereal disease.

Sages. Aromatic sage, Afrikaanse Salie. Blaauwblom, *Salvia africana* and *Salvia paniculata*. Geelblom or strand salie (sand salie), *Salvia aurea*. Decoction of leaves used for coughs and colds and also for women's troubles. Witte blom. Nuzie congesta. Salie prout. Leaves resemble those of a sage. *Buddlia salicifolia*. *Tarchonanthus camphoratus*.

Stink salie, (small grey whitish leaves), dried leaves used in decoction for common colds and externally as a lotion for sores. Berg salie, or mountain sage, green of dried leaves in decoction for coughs and colds, is evidently an expectorant, as it is stated it makes the cough ripe. Also used in decoction for washing sores. To-day these salies are used in combination with Katakruis and plain hoot and vaal bosch for fevers, such as measles.

Wild olives are used to make diaphoretic mixtures, or sweating draughts. One species, named in Nama, P/boom, is used in decoction of leaves, for dropsy, flatulence, and pains in the stomach, as a lotion for sores, and also the leaves are used as a plaster. The most prized is the sand olein hoot, the Nama D/kooi, a decoction of the leaves of which is administered in any cold or fever, from a common cold to typhoid.

Klein koorts bosch, little fever bush, *Grewia lycopodioides* L. is used in decoction as a diaphoretic.

[276]

Taalbosch, L/ or P/guara, *Rhus* sp. or *Rhus undulata* Jacq. The leaves of this plant are boiled and the liquor given for the troubles which arise after parturition. Of the two species of bush, long and short, the latter is preferred.

Vogelent, *Vernonia capensis* Lm. Nama Ale L/ kwue, a Taalbosch parasite, is used as an emmenagogue. Barand uses it for amenorrhoea, mixed with P/so, wild celery. By the Cape Boers it is used for epilepsy, cholera, and diarrhoea.

257
244
278

L/soer, a bush not identified, is used in decoction for post-natal fever. It is strongly purgative, and as the Native doctor says: "works the fire out of the stomach." It is never used for the young, but only for adult women. One informant states particularly it is used, when the patient is delirious, to "work it out."

Paleivrank, Nootai omma (Nama), a red tipped fairer pink, *Mentzelia laurifolia* or *sericeiformis*, is used for delayed labour, or retained after-birth. It is stamped and given as a pulp.

1 [A. Daggaleaves - Analyst]

Hoekiesdoorn, P/ahbi, is also an emmenagogue.

P/ungona, a thorn bush, *Sarcocaulon* sp., pounded whole and boiled, is a successful abortifacient according to many. Barend says that it is exceedingly good, but that he uses it only for parturient troubles in sheep. Klip melk bosch, *Euphorbia rectifolia*, given for tedious labours. When the treatment is continued for two or three days it "helps and strengthens."

Roodie rabaasem. Pappo, in his "*Flora Capensis*," mentions two *Pelargoniums* that are used medicinally in the Cape and Namaqualand, *Pelargonium antidysentericum*, in Nama D/hamio, which is boiled in milk and used as an astringent, and *P. anceps*, known to the Coloured and Afrianders as *Roodie rabaasem* and used by the Cape Malays to produce abortion or for helping on a confinement. In Namaqualand this is known as rabaas, which appears to be the original Nama name for it, or a corruption. The Afriander names it rooi wortel or rooi stroom. It is used for anaemias and weaknesses and repeated doses are given during fevers. The Boer uses it boiled or "set op brandywijn." Davison's oer, Baboon's ear, Bol (Nama), *Eriosepermum latifolium*, a red tuber, rasped up raw, used as a cold poultice on bruises and cuts, is considered good. The colour in each case appears to have been the chief attraction.

Kalkoen blom, or turkey flower, *Eutherlandia frutescens*, was used in decoction for washing wounds and given as drink for fevers. To-day it is used for consumption, chicken pox, etc. Roodi rabaas leaves, red again, are used as a poultice when thorns have pierced the foot, a common occurrence in a country covered with *Azacia horrida*.

Stinkbosch, *Nymphaea capensis* was, and is, given for emmenagogs. Stink bosch, On meide's bosch, or Old Women's bush, P/kahno, *Boeria foetida*, is possibly used as an emmenagogue, but mainly, as far as I can gather, as a decoction for pains in the back. There are a large number of aromatic bushes in the African veld, and many of these, in fact most, are in use, or have at some time past been used medicinally.

Rosemary, Nama name not identified, *Eriosepermum umbellatoides*, is used in decoction for pain in the stomach.

Stinkkruid, is used in decoction for stomach pains, in cases of scorpion sting, pounded, moistened and applied cold as a plaster.

D/hamioes or P/thangna, "something that grows near water," aromatic thyme, used as a tea, as a diaphoretic.

The common fire bush, L/naruo, so named because of its domestic use, combines the characteristics of aroma with redness of its small thick, juicy, finger-like leaves, which are chewed for pain in the stomach.

Kattendoren, or cat thorn, D/naasna, and the use of its roots in decoction in wasting disease, has already been mentioned. It is probably a modern application of the ancient principles of sympathetic medicine.

278
357
[7]

[7]

27
757

Quickgrass, *P/erre*, which has jointed roots of tremendous length, is used in decoction for coughs.

Baboon rope, *P/nyra sooriep*, a species of liana, is burned and the ash sprinkled on ringworms. Several of the modern herbalists use it in decoction for boils, administered internally, as also they use the smaller climber, bakker bosch, *Cynanchum cense*, Thun. *Passerina filiformis*, *P/tou*, which when lighted disappears in a blaze of flame, whence its usefulness to the baker after whom it is named, is used in decoction for shooting pains.

Suitleisel, *Berkheys* sp. a holly-like little bush about three feet high that grows near rivers and springs, is used in decoction for the same ailment. Sam uses it in powder as a plaster for burns and boils.

Candle bush, *Sarcocaula Burmannae*, a smaller variety *Petersonii*, is gathered, pounded fine, and used as an astringent for diarrhoea. Because of its laborious method of preparation it is named *D/nou D/nou*, which Sam translates as "work-work," but which is evidently an onomatopoeic word representing the sound of the stamping. The root is ground fine and used as a poultice, which is peppery and acts like a mustard plaster.

Gums and resins are used to only a small extent.

[204
212]

Heyra, the exudation of the acacia tree, is used as a food, and when boiled with fat as a salve for whitlows and boils. Possibly the case with which the tree exudes this substance was the starting point of this use.

Scaap rapayce, *D/ta dou*, a resin greener than the others, is eaten by animals, but not used much by man.

D/Goons, the resin of several species of *Euryops*, is gathered in the sands of Bushmanland where, having dropped from the stems of the bushes, it forms black concretions beneath: this is the reason that it is thought most of. It is boiled and the bitter decoction used in fevers. The red resin obtained from the woody parts of the same bush is also used. The stems of this plant when old are reddish and inflammable, even in wet weather.

PURGATIVES.

Purgatives are in great request. *P/gameroo*, a whitish herb with flat, green leaves not unlike those of the pumpkin, is cut and boiled, and the liquor is used as emetic and purgative, in stomach complaints.

Kraalbosch, *D/narrette*; *Rogies Aizels* L.; wild gentian, known as the Amblier bosch, or pilos bush, *Chironia baccifera*, of the decoction of which two mouthfuls is an efficient dose, have a rapid effect. It is also used in decoction for boils.

SNUFFS.

As well as snuffs to drive out the infection of death there were snuffs that cured headaches.

White Kafir-wood. A bush with a red flower, unidentified, which grows around the Orange River, powdered fine, is snuffed for flatulence, and is a very pungent snuff. Also used in decoction for the same purpose—slightly bitter. 278
757

Witte vergiet, a white chicory-like root, is powdered and used by some as a plaster, by others as a snuff. Barend declares that this is "first class" for headaches. Here, again, the principle is that of "driving out" by means of an explosive sneeze.

POULTICES.

Plasters and poultices are of common use to-day, and it appears that a soft hot application, whether cow-dung, the inside of a goat disc, or swelled alive to prevent loss of heat, or a preparation of herbs, was a favourite remedy with the Hottentots. The bulb of the C'koos P'naboo, veldschoon blaar or field shoes leaf, a large soft sole-like leaf is warmed, smeared with fat and applied to any swelling. P'nums ghana has been mentioned. D'nou D'nou was also used as a plaster, and this particular preparation is peppery, and has the same action as a mustard plaster.

The large number of bushes contained in the Hottentot Pharmacopoeia is the reason of certain seemingly filthy remedies being used. The modern goat-dung poultice is an animal preparation of immemorial repute, a preparation, too, warm and ready to hand of selected bush leaves. What then could be better to apply to a sore stomach? Such poultices have been applied by white people for pneumonia, appendicitis, peritonitis, and innumerable other complaints. For who knows more concerning the medicinal herbs of a country than its aborigine? And where could finer ground, ready to hand preparation be obtained than from the stomach of a goat or sheep? The stomach of the porcupine is dried and portions infused as required. Its action is diaphoretic. One man said that as long as he had that medicine he would never need any white or black doctor's help. Again the argument is that the porcupine eats so many "Bush things and strong things" that his stomach contents must be very good medicine. [25]

ANIMAL PRODUCTS.

L'am uru. The most famous animal product, one that figures even in the price lists of the modern wholesale chemists, is dasilepis, L'am uru, or D'gaous, the inspissated urine and faeces of the rock rabbit, gathered from the clefts and crannies inhabited by them. Boiled and strained the liquor is given in dry confinements, during parturition generally, and for irregularities of menstruation. In large doses it is believed to be the perfect abortifacient. Deposits of Dasilepis acted upon by the atmosphere, which gradually removes all the organic matter, form a dark pitch-like mass, the dasilepis of commerce, which 278
757
[24]
[47]

278
757
625
gradually changes into white potassium nitrate. The black intermediate product is called in Afrikaans *swart bo meester*, big black master, and the final product purified by air, *bo meester*, or grand big master, is potassium nitrate; it is the "big boss" of all medicines, *dassiepis* being given internally in decoction or infusion for all sorts of poisoning of whatever origin, and it is rubbed into scarified snake bites and scorpion stings. It is also used in such minor complaints as stiffness of the back and pains in the stomach.

278
757
[894]
897
[826]
Klipewet is boiled, strained and given as a tea in insufficient flow of waters during parturition, and also for unhealthy menstruation. In large doses it is used as an abortifacient, in smaller doses for pains in the back. To-day it is considered an ideal medicine for children.

Nasal mucus is an old Hottentot remedy, a handy one and probably the first ever used, for burns. The cast snake skin is burned and the powder used for the same complaint. The ease with which the snake leaves its old skin and its similarity to the thin cuticle covering a blister are probably the reason of its use.

Hyaena dung is precious, and in powder is given to children for convulsions. Among its modern uses is that of an ineffectual powder in cases of diphtheria. So strong is the faith in this remedy that no man, whatever be his colour, will see that white patch of faeces without pausing to pick it up.

757
171
Skins drawn warm off the living animal were used as an application for any severe pain. The use of such remedies has been world wide. It is mentioned by Miss Durham in "Man," 1913, 82, among some Balkan remedies, and the explanation for the use of warm sheep skin is similar to the Hottentot's explanation of his use of the porcupine's stomach—that the animal eats all sorts of herbs and that by this remedy the mixture thereof is enabled to soak into the patient.

752
278
C/ngema, a small greenish lizard about four inches long, is believed by the Native to be very poisonous. It is quick in movement and is called by the Nama, who kill it by thrown stones, the forked snake. The body is dried and powdered, and this is rubbed into excoriations over snake bites.

278
757
The Kanker beetle, or cancer beetle, is a small red and black flying insect which appears in decayed wood in spring. It is rubbed to pieces on warts—when the wart is expected to rot or to fly away. The more modern-minded Herard uses Euphorbia milk for this purpose, but goes a step further with the beetle, for he applies it to cancers.

PRESCRIPTIONS.

An old and much praised remedy is *ookoo C/namap*, which consists of burned and powdered ostrich egg shells mixed with tail fat of sheep or goat. This is rubbed into the chest of

children affected with snuffles or coryza. In some cases it is applied over the whole body. The name of the ostrich egg shell is shoo P/ooroo.

Many bushes have interesting non-medical uses. Gussap, *Stapelia flifera*, a cucumber-like growth, is used as a thirst quencher; Vaarkies blaar is used after the eating of the flesh of animals that have died of anthrax, not as the Kafir use certain shrubs to prevent the disease, but as an application to the boils that subsequently appear. Yet in 1923 several Bastards in Bushmanland died from the effects of eating anthrax-infected meat. L/kao D/han, the fleisch-boech or meat bush, has hard twigs with thick fleshy leaves, and is so named by the Dutch because the Hottentots used it as a support for meat after slaughtering to keep it off the sand, the reason for the choice of this particular bush being that, though in contact with the meat, it did not taint it. The P/aboe, or fluitie-boech, the flute bush, was stripped of its bark to make a species of pipes of Pan, when no reeds were obtainable. It is never used now, and only the name survives to keep alive the memory of the Hottentot reed dances.

278
757278
P24
751
231

P24

the poison of wild animals or of weapons. If they are wounded they beat the injured part with a stick until it is deprived of feeling, then they scarify it, and then suck so vigorously that the skin almost comes off with the blood.⁷⁵² This method of cure, however, (which Severinus* compares with his own effective surgery) differs, according to the various poisons, both in the length of time for which the beating must be carried on and in the efficacy of the sucking. The scorpion, for instance, does not leave the traces of his poison so deep as the millipede. Indeed the scorpion in these parts is not so poisonous. If you press his tail hard a little above the sting, he gradually emits a clear little drop on the barbed end of the sting, unless he happens to have struck a little time before. He is but little more injurious than our bees at home; he is slow in recovering the force of his poison; one that is stung by him thinks that he has got a knock from a stone. But the millipede with burning ferocity presses his poison home. Of the vipers we have spoken above.

If the wound is a bad one, they cut away the slightest sign of gangrene with the sharp points of their weapons, and if it has spread far, they remove the whole of the infected part. All bruises they treat by anointing them either with sheep or cow fat, for they know no other kind of unguent, then by scarifying them, and finally by vigorous sucking, so that the blood and the skin are removed. They get rid of rheumatism in the same way, the only difference being that they expose the part anointed with fat to the fire, in order that, if the affected parts are plump, they may by roasting the flesh drive the rheumatism out. Immediately on treating the part they fall to at the sucking.

Apart from this they know a very few vegetable remedies, but choose ones; and, as I have said, these cannot be got from them for love or money. Accordingly we must suppose these persons to be themselves deceived or to be deceiving ⁷⁵⁷ 278 •

on the feet small incisions were made as the cuppers are accustomed to do; the foot itself was placed in hot coals; a man and a woman were sucking the blood from the cuts, spitting it out on the coals, and pulling away as heartily as a child at its mother's breast." Ten Rhyne's description of the Hottentot medical practices is on the whole borne out by Crevierius and other reliable authorities.

* Marcus Aurelius Severinus (1580-1650), an Italian physician, was the author of numerous works on medical subjects.

070 pretio reficere potui. Quapropter falluntur & fallunt, qui se a mendaciis, & quae morunt, corde prementibus Hottentottis multa intellesse jactant. Colicem aromaticis quadam radice confectum curant. Subigunt & Defusae quandam speciem, ut opinor, Doche vocant illi, quam accurate pinguem, pistam, conglobatam & exsiccatam comedunt (ut plerique Muhamedenorum Amision sive opium) eoque enerviter inebriantur. Recens natorum infantium umbilicis ossa prescius ligant, non resecant, tandem sponte decidenda. Singula haec a quadam Hottentottis accepit, ab illa praeter ea nihil rescire potens.

CAP. XXVII.

De Lingua eorundem.

Si quis eos loquentes auscultet, reviviscere Pythagorae verum discit, in quo visus mutuo sermonis consorcio pellulase finguntur. Quippe revera ¹⁾ stridor non vox est, si Hottentottis expressionem expendas: nam quodvis vocabulum stridulo linguae (apocoro applicita²⁾ palato) clangere solet. Nunc haud perperam quis opinetur, hanc linguae ad palatum crepitationem vocalium vim exprimere, caeteras autem vocum cupulas ex alio pectore produrunt, gurgite articulatae labilis pronunciantes. Adeo ut cum illis gentibus omni orationis commercio careant; neque ex tanto temporis intervallo e postribus repertas aliquid, qui perfecte cum ipsis colloqui potuerit: nisi illi, qui dudum prope periclitatam vitam transigere, nostratibus se accommodant, plurima Belgica vocabula, sola terminatione diversa callentes. Omnia ferme finit in Kom, ut fahog-kom, lahacum, karkom, pertiancula, horom, audire, &c.

¹⁾ Jul. de Allouville Plin. Indem.

²⁾ Appliquet. R.F.

757 279 ¹⁾ The Hottentots of Little Namaqualand use decoctions of *Fraxinopis Umbellata* or of the powdered and boiled root of *Asperula pallens* for this purpose (Schapera, op. cit., 411).

276 ²⁾ On *stippe* (the leaves of *Isocoma lanarum*), see above, p. 42.

others, who boast that they have learned many things from the Hottentots. For in the first place the Hottentots lie, and, in the second, they are determined to keep their secret remedies to themselves. They cure colic quickly by a certain aromatic root.¹²¹) They employ also a certain species of *Datura*, as I think, called *dacha*.¹²²) This they bray carefully, and after braying, make it into balls and eat it, as many Mahomedans do with *Amsion* or *optum*. It makes them monstrous drunk.

The umbilical cord of a new born infant they tie firmly, but do not cut back. The cord falls off by itself after a time.¹²³) These details I learned from a certain Hottentot woman. I could get no further information from any source.

CHAP. XXVII.

Their Language.

If one listens to them talking, one supposes the age of Pythagoras to have returned, in which birds were fabled to have enjoyed mutual converse in speech. In sober truth it is noise, not speech, if one attends to the mode of expression of the Hottentots; for every single word is finished by a noisy click of the tongue against the echoing palate. One would not be wrong in saying that this clicking of the tongue against the palate is the main element in the sounds, but that the linking of the sounds is fetched up from their deep chests, their lips being generally rounded. The result is that they are bereft of all interchange of speech with other races; nor after all this lapse of time can one of our countrymen be found who can converse perfectly with them. Those Hottentots, however, who have lived long in the neighbourhood of the Fort, adapt themselves to our countrymen, acquiring many Dutch terms, of which they modify the terminations. They end nearly all their borrowed words in *-koo*: as *fabagkoo*, tobacco; *horkoo*, a little piece; *horkoo*, to hear, etc. Their vernacular does not contain many roots, but the words are enriched with affixes.

¹²¹) Kolb likewise says that the umbilical cord is bound with a piece of sheep's snout until it falls off; the modern Hottentots tie it half-way with a thread of snout or wood fibre, then cut it through above the knot, and leave the part attached to the baby to fall away by itself (Chapman, op. cit., 364, 365).

10: Grevenbroek F-5 (ca. 1694) 1933
FX13 Hottentot FX13
Cape Hottentot
Nama

AN ACCOUNT OF THE HOTTENTOTS

243

Angry humours, inflammations, inflammations, tumours and other swellings they treat by sucking with their mouths as successfully as our physicians by cupping.⁴⁰) I am informed by the parents that a European girl scarcely ten years old was treated in this way by a native woman who managed to suck from the pudenda a stone the size of a bean.

When a convalescent has been strengthened by wholesome broths and medicines, the priest or soothsayer shaves all his hair off with a razor. Then he rubs him from the tips of his toes to the hair on his head with green leaves, like our willows, but smaller, and with a small like appleskin. After that he washes him in warm water, and, finally, when the cure is complete, in cold. Furthermore a sacrifice for health is made with a sheep or two, and if the restored invalid is sufficiently rich in cattle, the victim may be an ox or other plough-animal or draught-animal. The priest anoints the man with the fat of the victim and sprinkles him with bechu powder; next the entrails of the animal are plaited and hung round his neck like an amulet; then his blanket is anointed with fat and sprinkled with bechu, and at last he is let go, well and whole, to banquet with his fellows. The doctor's reward is to be welcomed among his friends at a feast of thanksgiving for his recovery.⁴¹)

Healing or noxious plants and their qualities they know extremely well. I remember their pointing out a flower to me and telling me that, when it sprouts from the earth, their women every year in the month of September during several days fall into a deep sleep and drowsiness; it is as if a torpor had overcome them, and they lie snoring in a sort of cataleptic trance till late in the day⁴²). They are also able to foretell the weather; nor do they seem to be wholly ignorant of the various movements of the stars and constellations, as may be inferred from an instance I shall quote below.

⁴⁰) This rite appears to be essentially the same as that still performed among the Nama, although it varies somewhat in detail. At the end of any grave illness, the patient, who has hitherto been secluded in a hut where he was subject to various taboos, is ceremonially cleansed with a mixture of moist cowdung and mineral powder, is given a new set of garments to wear, takes part in a special purification meal with all the other people who have recovered from the same disease, and is finally ceremonially reintroduced to all the ordinary daily tasks from which he was cut off during his seclusion (Mrs. A. W. Hensold, *Harvard African Studies*, II, 774; cf. Schapera, 486-7, 801-2).

⁴¹) I have been unable to find any confirmation for this statement, and cannot imagine to what plant G. is referring.

b7c

Vulnus herbarum succo per syphonem et immisso, aut earundem succo, aut bullorum quorundam tunicle, etiam insulas butyro sibiique obligatum curant, saepeque urina ferventi, et in dimidium sui partem decocti bibunt; si quem venenatum animal pepugit vel momordit, aut si quis virulentis arida lacus, protinus ejus crura, pedem aut brachium supra subtusque plagam vincturi, morsa, facili, aut loris artissime sistendae sanguinis circulationi, et ne virus per venas laevo serpet constringunt, varisque incidendis cultro aut spiedo circum vulnus recta descendenti non transversa linea per cutem facili, continuo vir aut mulier accurrit, oreque plagas admo, virus omne exurit. O factum bene! quid hoc ope medica praestantius? quid hoc fide majus? quid hoc alestipharmao salubrius?

Cupido sciendi confectionem Butyri dicam. Urem laud Interorum verat lacte propemodum complent, hocque ejus crithum constringunt, quem decora larvae, et utraque extremitate substatum, ultra diutius diversitate crustibus stantes commoveant, quoniam et constrictum, donec eremur in butyrum conglutino concretusque sit.

Si forte contingit contra haec remedia malum ingravescere, illos insectantur viperam, anguem aut serpentem qualemcumque obviam, quem notatum apud sanctum ferunt, aperitque effratque ejus ore, omne virus et admo, quod duabus vesiculis quantum vel avellana capere, ori albumini autem, in utraque manilla juxta dentes situm, qui morbo infat huncmodi bestiarum corpore, per foramen, quo vitium ad virus recuperant, concavi illud vulnere insperant: haec vesiculas cum aliquot scorpionibus aliisque bestis simul mistas et effras cum vaccine lacte, tanquam sacrum anchoram aegro pro potione medica dant, adhibentes male hunc modo malum curant, saepeque hoc clavo clavam feliciter pellunt: utinamque serpentem totum quantum candentibus carbonibus locatum in pulverem lapidibus commotum, quo saluti corpus, praecipue vulnera perficiant, hocque medicamentum us explorationem.

752 ** of The Hyster's description, p. 148 f. above.

237 ** See above, p. 128.

752 ** The modern Hottentots still use snake poison on occasion as an antidote to snake bite, a small dose of prepared venom diluted in water being swallowed. The crushed head of the snake may be applied as a poultice in case of snake bite, powdered spider as a poultice for spider bite, while in the case of scorpion sting the particular animal if possible is captured, its tail and

10: Grevenbroek F-5 (ca. 1694) 1933
FX13 Hottentot FX13
Cape Hottentot

AN ACCOUNT OF THE HOTTENTOTS

347

They treat wounds by introducing into them through a pipe the juice of plants, or else they bind them with the leaves of plants or the scale of certain bulls, using also unsmelted butter and lard. They also wash the wound with the urine of the wounded man, reducing the quantity to half by boiling. A sting or bite from a poisonous animal, or a wound from a poisoned weapon they treat with great skill. The injured leg, foot or arm they at once bind above and below the wound, very firmly, in order to check the circulation of the blood and prevent the poison spreading along the veins; then they make various incisions in the skin with a knife or spear-head round the wound, not across but in descending straight lines; then immediately a man or woman runs up, puts his lips to the wound and sucks all the poison out⁷⁵²). O noble deed! What could be better than this medical aid? Where shall we find greater loyalty? What more effective antidote exists?

If you wish to know their way of making butter, I can tell you. They take a skin bag, with the woolly side in, and almost fill it with milk; then the neck is tied tightly with a thong, and the butter-maker, standing with his legs apart, and holding one end of the bag in his left hand and the other in his right, moves it vigorously up and down, to and fro, shaking and churning it, until the cream has been named and hardened into butter²³⁴).

If by chance the trouble increases in spite of these remedies, forthwith they look for the first viper, snake or serpent they can find, and kill it and bring it to the wounded man. Then they break open its mouth and take all the poison from it. This poison is contained in two little glands. There is about as much of it as would fill a nut-shell; it is like the white of an egg; and it is situated in each jaw near the teeth. The teeth are hollow, and when they are fixed by a bite into the body of man or beast they transmit into the wound through the opening in them the poison they draw from the glands nearby. It is these glands that they mix with scorpions or other poisons, boil in cow's milk, and administer to the sick man as a last hope. In this they are often successful, applying the toughest wedge to the toughest notch, or driving out a nail with a nail, as the proverb says. Finally they toast the whole serpent on glowing coals, and grind it to powder with stones. With the powder they rub the body of the wounded man, especially the wound⁷⁵²). Experience has shown them the great worth of this remedy.

clippers pulled off, and the body ground and applied as a paste to the wound. (Schapera, op. cit., 488). O's observation therefore appears to be accurate enough.

752
825
278